

## APPLICANT FEEDBACK SUMMARY

### 2013 AmeriCorps State and National Grant Competition

**Legal Applicant:** The College of New Jersey

**Application ID:** 13ED147894

**Program Name:** National Bonner AmeriCorps Program

For the purpose of enhancing our programs by improving the quality and quantity of applications to the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS), we are providing specific feedback regarding the strengths and weaknesses of this application. These comments are not meant to represent a comprehensive assessment; rather the analysis represents those elements that had the greatest bearing on the rating of the application. Please note that this feedback consists of summary comments from more than one reviewer. For this reason, some of the comments may seem to be inconsistent or contradictory. Comments are not representative of all of the information used in the final funding decision.

#### Reviewers' Summary Comments:

(+) The applicant provides a sampling of data from some of the target states that shows a compelling need for educational support services. For example, 65% of economically disadvantaged students in Jefferson County, Tennessee lack grade-level proficiency in math; 20% of teens in Los Angeles, California, are high-school dropouts; and 71% of third grades in Trenton, New Jersey lack proficiency in language arts.

(+) The applicant's education program is clearly geared to serve economically disadvantaged communities in the target states in that the poverty rates in many of the communities exceeds the national rate of 15%. Data from some of the communities served in Tennessee, Kentucky, California, and New Jersey show that 25% -27% of children live in poverty. Data from these communities also show low academic achievement, high dropout rates, and large percentages of students eligible for free or reduced-price lunches.

(+) Members serving in the education projects will primarily serve in after-school programs to increase academic engagement among K-12 students. Some of the activities are aptly designed to fulfill this role, such as engaging parents in discussions about their child's school attendance, providing individualized homework assistance, and educating youth about higher education.

(+) Studies cited by the applicant clearly demonstrate a positive correlation between academic engagement and participation in afterschool programs. The applicant expresses commitment to serve with the targeted afterschool programs to implement three practices identified as critical by a 2008 Harvard Family Research Project study--access to and sustained participation in the programs; quality programming; and strong partnerships with families and stakeholders.

(-) It is unclear how program interventions in the education focus area are connected with the best practices identified by the Harvard Family Research Project.

(-) Member roles such as creating an environment where youth feel welcome and successful are not supported by sufficient detail on how Members will achieve this. Also, the applicant states that Members will reward and

recognize good attendance rather than perfect attendance but it is unclear what constitutes good attendance or how the rewards and recognition will be implemented.

(-) It is not clear how the applicant selected the population that it proposes to serve.